

SOUTHERN SUFFRAGE PIONEERS

Florida, Georgia and Alabama Women Working for the Ballot.

The Florida Equal Franchise League came into existence, full-fledged in June, 1912. A meeting was called at a private residence, the handsome Anderson residence on Market St., Jacksonville, being loaned for the occasion, a number of women were reached by telephone, about thirty-five met, and Florida was a Suffrage state. As chairman of the committee on constitution and by-laws the writer insisted on the name of Equal Franchise. It seemed so just, as a name, so fully setting forth the real object of organization; and so rapidly has Suffrage moved, that even then in June, 1912, the name Suffrage Association seemed to cast a gauntlet, and many there were ready to lift it and assume the aggressive. But in these two years all is changed. The seriousness and justice of equal citizenship is no longer a jest or a semi-crime, while the re-habilitating of the many states having suffrage, the voting for the right men and not for politics, has caused the public, (and the public in Florida is still composed of men), to "sit up and take notice." But the name Equal Franchise has won for the league many compliments from the men speaking to the league, so although the word Suffrage has lost its sting for the politician, we are yet proud of being the Florida Equal Franchise League.

The new movement attracted great attention, and notwithstanding the summer heat, the regular monthly meetings were large affairs, too large for private houses. A paid membership of forty-five was enrolled, but more than a hundred persons attended at several of the meetings.

HEADQUARTERS ESTABLISHED.

Through the courtesy of Mr. J. E. Cohen of Cohen Bros., the league was given a room in the large office building the first and second stories of which the firm occupies, and the first Suffrage headquarters in Florida established. In the fall of that year, 1912, the first large work was done. The meeting of the National Child Labor Convention was at Jacksonville, bringing as two of its most gifted speakers two prominent Suffrage workers, Mrs. Florence Kelly of New Orleans, and Miss Jean Gordon of New Orleans, a gifted and womanly southern girl, whose brilliant sister Kate Gordon of New Orleans is the President of the Southern States Suffrage Conference. Feeling the responsibility of leaders in the cause, the Florida Equal Franchise League interviewed the two ladies, who consented to give an evening to Suffrage. We set about getting a place for the speaking. Did we have any trouble? Well it was amusing, we could find no place for a cock fight. The Child Labor Convention met at the Board of Trade Auditorium, Mrs. Kelly and Miss Gordon spoke there every day. Things were said of legislatures that we, as Suffragists, did not then dare to say; bills were framed and endorsed to be sent to the legislature in April. The Board of Trade Auditorium was to be let at a small price for public entertainments, concerts, meetings of various kinds. We called on the chairman of the Board of Governors, explained that we would pay for the auditorium, that the speakers were Mrs. Kelly and Miss Gordon. The chairman was pleased to let us have it, but nine governors must give a majority vote. Well they did not. But we understood that there was quite a lot of debate, the vote being finally given against the meeting "out of deference to the feelings of Mr. ———, who was so bitterly opposed to Suffrage."

A very elaborate luncheon was served at the Woman's club building for the Child Labor conference, after-dinner speeches were made, legislation discussed and endorsed, both Mrs. Kelly and Miss Gordon spoke, and yet we had also been refused the auditorium of the Woman's Club, even though we were ready to pay the regular rental of twenty-five dollars for the evening. Both the Board of

Mrs. Roselle C. Cooley (Florence Murphy Cooley.)



President of the Florida Equal Franchise League, Florida Vice President of the Southern States Suffrage Conference, Member of the Political Equality Club of New York City. Member of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, of The Woman's Club of Jacksonville, of the National Society Daughters of the Confederacy. Author of The Presiding Officer. Mrs. Cooley is also well-known for her magazine and newspaper articles. A prominent society woman and gracious hostess, she makes time for the things considered modern and feminist, and takes an active part in the charities of Jacksonville, being secretary of the Board of Lady Managers of St. Luke's Hospital Association.

Trade and the Woman's Club said they could not let the building for "political" speaking. We claimed we were not political, in that we espoused no party. That we were no more political than the child-labor convention, which was true. Mr. Cohen again came to our assistance, we had a second room for the evening, a door opening between and our own headquarters, which we felt like rechristening "Suffrage Refuge." Taking alarm at the attitude of the Board of Trade and the Woman's Club, and fearing our guests would not have a full audience, we established a cake sale at the main entrance to the store, and all day we sold cakes and handed out hand-bills. To the hundreds of shoppers and passers-by, we gave out hand-bills. The evening came on with a misty drizzle, and we were correspondingly depressed. But not so the public. Hundreds of people came, the "Golf Bunch" business men, lawyers, those already suffragists, the curious, and those willing to be converted. And this was Florida's first public speaking for Suffrage. As a member of the Woman's Club and a guest at the luncheon I made an after-luncheon announcement of the Suffrage speaking to be held in the evening, and there was a calm that you could have cut with a knife. None of the usual buzz following an announcement, no enthusiasm that so loudly applauded Mrs. Kelly and Miss Gordon at Board of Trade and at the luncheon, were to be heard again. And now all that is changed also. At the great Federation meeting at Chicago, five thousand delegates with only forty dissenting votes, endorsed Votes for Women.

It is not strange that the members of the executive board of the Florida Equal Franchise League feel themselves not only pioneers, but almost

martyrs, in the cause of Suffrage in Florida.

The spring of 1913 suddenly thrust upon us the fact that the Florida legislature would meet in April, and that it met only every two years. So we must be up and doing if we were to be factors in the betterment of woman's position in Florida; and owing to the pre-historic laws of the state, in few other states do women really need Suffrage, as in Florida.

A letter to the National Suffrage Association brought to our assistance Miss Jeanette Rankin, I think at that time the only field worker. Her local expense was to be taken care of by our league. Taking her en route as my house guest, to save the hotel fare, I found her a very charming and well balanced young woman, and her work at Tallahassee was invaluable, as we were inexperienced. Even the legislators opposed to Suffrage would come to talk to Miss Rankin, she never entered into an argument, but possessed a legal mind, and was quick at repartee, but never cutting. She left many friends and not one enemy in the legislature at Tallahassee. Lake Helen had organized a Suffrage league on February 13th and the latter league wrote offering to assist us at Tallahassee. Dr. Mary A. Safford and her adopted daughter, Mrs. Victor Starbuck came for a short stay, and later Dr. Safford came back for two days.

The work of patient waiting and careful waiting went on for weeks, I was at Tallahassee four times, the last time remaining for ten days. Miss Anderson, Mrs. J. Lee Kirby-Smith, and Mrs. E. M. Sanderson made short stays but all of these visiting ladies accomplished great good, in Suffrage it is numbers that count. Mrs. Frederick C. Locke, of Jacksonville seemed the one league member that could stay with Miss Rankin, and her quiet self-possession and good judgment fitted her admirably for the work at Tallahassee. She it was who found that three of the Senators were traveling on passes, and also that these passes were not registered in the office of the Railroad Commissioner, although he was quoted as saying he knew these passes were out. And just here we got a really first lesson in real politics. We wanted a man to have these law breaking senators up before the grand jury. He wanted us to do the act. We felt that we needed all the friends we had, and must avoid any militant or

aggressive movement, and we were not in a position to do this at that time. Several "progressives" and reformers so called talked with us, but not one of them wanted to enter the complaint. We were not afraid to do this, indeed we would have enjoyed it, but we had larger interests at stake. And we thought that it was only necessary to call attention of the reformers to these law-breakers. Query: What is a reformer?

I received a wire from Miss Rankin that we were to appear before the committee. I advanced upon Tallahassee with the other members of the executive board of the league, and upon arriving was informed that it would be an evening hearing, and a committee of the whole. In this instance it meant the whole House, the whole Senate, and the whole town. The House of Representatives was packed, people standing on window ledges, in chairs, and out into the hall as far as eye could see. A most embarrassing position for a party of women who had expected to be heard by five men in "A" "B" or "C" committee room. Did we qualify? We did. Did we fail? We did not. As chairman of the legislative work the writer introduced the speakers, they were Miss Anderson, Miss Safford, Mrs. Starbuck, Miss Rankin, myself, Mr. John Williams, Mr. Frank Huffaker, and Hon. W. Maples who requested the floor. We passed upon a vote of the committee taking publicly at the close of the speaking, but the first committee man called had promised to vote that the amendment be admitted to the House, and he voted "NO" in unmistakable capitals. Men-

orandum: Politicians are peculiar people. After days of encouragement and discouragement, the vote came, 28 to 28. We hardly expected to win. It took New York Suffragists twenty years to get their bill past one committee. So our 28 firm friends were a great balm to our feeling of disappointment.

Saturday night we started home like the other legislators and a Senator told us they were waiting for us in the Senate, that they would show the House how to treat ladies, and that we would make a great mistake if we did not come back and go into the Senate. Miss Rankin was again my guest as we planned our campaign, and we decided to go back to Tallahassee. Senator Fred Stone of Columbia, talked the matter over with us, took up our bill and enrolled it as on the special calendar where each Senator has one bill, and we had sixteen senators with us. Escambia's Senator Stokes being one of our firmest supporters, and Mr. Stokes' speech for the bill was followed by a masterly and brilliant speech by Mr. Stokes. Notwithstanding new friends, we shall greatly miss Mr. Stokes in 1915. The man who invited us back never came within speaking distance of our party, and one of the statesmen deflected, (that seems a polite way of putting it), so on a motion to indefinitely postpone we lost by that one vote, fifteen for us and sixteen against. And that man said it would "waste much time." If you really want to see time wasted just sit through one session of the legislature.

(Continued on Page Eight.)

Suffrage Work in Columbus, Ga.

By Mrs. Walter J. Woodall.



(By Mrs. Walter J. Woodall, associate editor of The Industrial Index, Columbus, Ga., and who was editor-in-chief of the equal franchise edition of The Columbus Ledger.)

In November next the question of woman suffrage will be submitted to the voters of four states. In the three states of New York, Pennsylvania and Iowa equal suffrage measures have received the approval of the legislature at one session. In New Jersey a franchise measure was enacted and declared void on account of defective advertising. The Wisconsin legislature enacted such a measure and it was vetoed by the governor. The Georgia legislature has just considered such a measure. It was championed in the House of Representatives by Hon. Harry Wright, of Floyd county, and in the Senate by Hon. B. S. Miller, of the 24th Congressional district; these men being among the leaders in the legislature and public men of the state. The measure was defeated, but the majority against it

was small, being especially so in the Senate, and the men and women of the state who favor equal suffrage feel that, in a sense, the result in the legislature was more favorable than they had expected. In all probability the next legislature will adopt the measure for by that time public sentiment will be squarely behind it.

Among those who have long and ably championed woman suffrage in Georgia are Mrs. W. H. Edlin, a noted writer of Cartersville, and her sister, Mrs. Mary L. McLendon, of Atlanta; Mrs. Emily Fitten McDougald, Atlanta; Miss Lucy Stanton and Mrs. Walter B. Hill, of Athens; Mrs. Charles M. Woodall, and Miss Annie Belle Redd, of Columbus; Mrs. John H. Reynolds and Mrs. Madeline J. Wyle, Rome, and Mrs. Carl H. Fuller and Mrs. E. L. Martin, Macon.

Up to about two years ago there was no organization of woman suffrage advocates in Georgia. Now there are organizations in Macon, Cartersville, Columbus, Rome, Athens and Atlanta, the last named city having three.

The Equal Franchise League of Muscogee county was organized in Columbus less than a year ago and now has more than 200 members. The organization was perfected following an address at a public meeting by Mr. Jordan, of Columbus, banker, manufacturer and publicist, and one of the great men of the south, who for many years has favored equal franchise. The club was tendered by former Mayor Rhodes Browne the free use of commodious and attractive quarters in one of the largest office buildings in the city, and began immediately an active campaign. Each Monday afternoon a tea was given under the immediate direction of some member of the league and the public was invited. Regular meet-

SUFFRAGE IN ALABAMA

Mrs. Solon Jacobs, President of Alabama Equal Suffrage League, Writes of Work in That State.



PATTIE R. JACOBS

Alabama has been at work for suffrage such a short time that the growth of the organized forces of the movement is really phenomenal. In the early, pioneer days little or no effort was made to enter this field, and so the soil was not prepared, apparently, for the seed sown about two years ago by five courageous women in Selma when the first struggling Equal Suffrage Association was formed.

In less than two years we have seen thirty-five definite organizations take root in the state, some more firmly established than others. These associations vary from the small village group with a few members, to the wonderfully active, highly organized association in Birmingham with its eight hundred and fifty members, its splendidly equipped headquarters and its far-reaching influence.

Favorable sentiment exists in many places throughout the state, which have not yet been reached by the organizers, all of whom are volunteers and unpaid.

The legislature of Alabama meets only every four years, a fact which has spurred the Suffragists to redouble their efforts. When it convenes in January, 1915, for the first time in the history of the state a Suffrage bill asking for enfranchisement on equal terms with the men of Alabama, will be introduced. A petition to the members of the legislature is now being circulated, and names of both men and women who favor submitting the question to the voters, are being added by the hundreds. It is confidently predicted that the legislators will realize that the womanhood of the state is neither unintelligent nor torpid, but awake to the need of the ballot, and that they are unwilling to be placed last in the list of the remaining eighteen states in which women have no voice in their own government.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦
♦ GIFTED WRITER AND SUFFRAGIST. ♦
♦ Mary Johnston, the author of ♦
♦ "To Have and to Hold," in ♦
♦ speaking of the awakening of ♦
♦ women, says: ♦
♦ "It is a great thing to be a woman ♦
♦ awake in this twentieth ♦
♦ century, in the woman's century, ♦
♦ awake and cognizant of the ♦
♦ change and lift and promise of ♦
♦ the time, awake and determined ♦
♦ to help even if it be ever so ill- ♦
♦ fated to help toward a better, ♦
♦ deeper, juster, more beautiful un- ♦
♦ derstanding between men and ♦
♦ women and a nobler, fairer, hap- ♦
♦ pier world for men and women ♦
♦ and their children. It is a great ♦
♦ thing to help, even ever so little, ♦
♦ toward molding wonderfully the ♦
♦ child of all of us—the great fu- ♦
♦ ture. ♦
♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

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